areas which require sophisticated technology or which would help increase the country's export potential.

Spread of Epidemics

1404. SHRI B.K. HARI PRASAD: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the seriousness of the various epidemics recurring in the country as brought out by noted writer Ujwala Samrath in the April, 1990 issue of "Health for Millions";

(b) whether Government would create an infrastructure to check these diseases more firmly; and

(c) whether for each major disease a separate NGO-based grass-root level set up, with full Government support in every district/state will be formed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI RASHEED MASOOD): (a) to (c) The Government has seen the Editorial of "Health for Millions" April, 1990 issue published by Voluntary Health Association of India. Epidemics are known from times immemorial. In present days, number of epidemics/outbreaks are more often reported because of better diagnostic facilities, better communications and better disease surveillance system, due to which even small focal outbreak comes to light. The Government has established a large health infrastructure having a wide network of hospitals, Primary Health Centres, Sub-centres and dispensaries to achieve "Health for All by 2,000 A.D." Government also is encouraging voluntary efforts in this regard and supports a large number of voluntary Organisations to improve the health care delivery.

Efficacy of Vitamin A Pills

1405. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a recent study made by the National Institute of Nutrition has completely exposed the claims being made by multi-national drug manufacturers marketing synthetic Vitamin A pills that these pills could reduce child-mortality in undernourished communities by as much as 30 per cent; and

(b) if so, what is being done to stop these manufacturers from exploiting the innocent public?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI RASHEED MASOOD): (a) and (b) Studies conducted in Indonesia show that administration of six monthly doses of 2.00 lakh. International Units of Vitamin A reduces the mortality rate among children by about 30% when compared to controls. The International Vitamin A Consultative Group stated that Vitamin A prevents nutritional blindness and contributes significantly to child health and survival. However, the mechanism by which it has effect on reduction of mortality is not clear.

The study conducted by Arvind Eye Hospital in Thiruchirapalli District of Tamilnadu showed significant reduciton of mortality rate among children who were given frequent small doses of Vitamin. However a study conducted by National Institute of Nutrition did not show any effect on child mortality with Vit. A supplement.

In this context it is stated that six monthly doses of Vit. A (2.00 lakh I.U.) is given to children 1—5 years to prevent blindness a ong them under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Prophylaxis Against Blindness duc